

Staff: Issues to consider when responding to bullying

- Respond to all situations

This means that any reported incident needs to be addressed, whether it is stopping it and addressing all involved, or by gathering information about it to determine magnitude of incident and possible solution/response.

- If personally witness: Intervene immediately
 - Do not redirect behaviors of those involved: address the situation directly
 - Stop the incident.
 - Cite the policy when responding, directing bullies to the appropriate place/person to receive punishment, as determined by the policy.
 - Identify bystanders for possible later information.
 - Talk to victim in private about the issue (the problem over time, both in the past and possibly the future).
- If informed by a student of an incident/situation
 - Gather all information
 - Have each person involved write down what happened, independent of the others (this works especially well when a bully group is identified)
 - Talk to other witnesses/bystanders if relevant (have them write down information as well)
 - Make a plan with victim to address it (see below)
 - Protect identity of informer if it is known (not result of anonymous report)
 - Do not directly confront bully until plan has been determined
- Solutions and Responses after (including punishments)
 - Work with others (bullying committee) to come up with solutions
 - Be creative: No one solution works for all
 - There can be immediate punishments for actions and then long term responses to change behavior/culture
 - Include victim in the solution (empowers the victim)
 - Focus on behaviors, not individuals

Not about labeling kids, but focusing on the behaviors that are not acceptable. It helps students to focus on the issues and not the people. As a result, specific behaviors become less acceptable, regardless of who performs them.

- Rely on the school policy, including identifying responses to bullying/sexual harassment when making decisions (be consistent)
- Do not require students to work it out
- Identify location and increase supervision at location
 - Intent is to personally witness incident, which reduces likelihood of retaliation against informant or victim.
- Notify parents (of all students involved)

Determine best time frame to inform parents, and the format. Use school policy to do so. For the victim, include them in the discussion of informing parents.

Responding to Bullies:

- Do not punish publically
 - Do not bully the bully
- Alternative responses/punishments for bullying

This is to limit the focus on punitive responses, which can help reduce the likelihood of retaliation against victim (or informer). It also helps the bully to learn appropriate behaviors without being ostracized (or labeled), as it focuses on behaviors that can be addressed. It keeps students in the learning environment (and often the only stable environment they have), such as in-school suspensions.

- Get bullies involved in positive working relationships
 - Mentoring- peer and/or younger student mentoring (e.g. elementary)
- Increase socio-emotional learning for bullies
 - For example, Second Step: Empathy, self control and anger management

Responding to Victims:

- Connect victims with social groups (peer mentoring, service clubs, other related groups)
 - Can help to increase self esteem
 - Establishes a group support network
 - Connects victim with a group who is focused on acceptance
 - Can, if needed, help to further socialize student (if student has been identified as having limited social skills)
- Follow up with victims (bystanders, especially if they reported incident)

Keeps them informed of situation, letting them know their voice matters, and that the school (and teachers/staff) are trustworthy and safe. This connects them more to the school, and increases the likelihood of informing again. Do not need to offer them details, just that it is being investigated, addressed, etc.